
Introduced by Senator Speier

February 24, 2006

An act to add Section 49605 to the Education Code, relating to pupil counseling, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1731, as introduced, Speier. Guidance counseling: funding.

Existing law authorizes the governing board of any school district to provide a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils enrolled in the schools of the district.

This bill would make an appropriation of \$100,000,000 from the General Fund to the State Department of Education for the purpose of increasing the number of guidance counselors in public schools including kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. The bill would make related declarations and findings, as well as a statement of legislative intent.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 49605 is added to the Education Code,
- 2 to read:
- 3 49605. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 4 following:
- 5 (1) California ranks 50th among the 50 states in guidance
- 6 counseling support for pupils.
- 7 (2) California has a total of only 6,400 guidance counselors for
- 8 more than six million pupils in public schools including all or
- 9 any of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. In California

1 public schools there is an average of one counselor per 954
2 pupils.

3 (3) The American School Counselor Association recommends
4 a ratio of an average of one counselor per 250.

5 (4) In 2003, the California Department of Education studied
6 the level of pupil support services provided in public schools
7 including all or any of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.
8 The department found that 306 school districts out of 985 in the
9 state failed to provide even one guidance counselor to their
10 pupils.

11 (5) School districts overwhelmingly recognize the need for
12 more guidance counselors and have identified district budget
13 limitations as a major obstacle to increasing their numbers.

14 (6) Studies have identified a direct correlation between pupil
15 performance and access to adequate guidance counseling.

16 (7) In order for California's ratio of one guidance counselors
17 per 1000 pupils to reach the national average, the number of
18 guidance counselors would need to double.

19 (8) In order for California's ratio of guidance counselors to
20 reach the national average, school districts require approximately
21 \$650 million in additional education funding.

22 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to double the number of
23 guidance counselors in public schools including any or all of
24 kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, over the next five
25 years, or sooner if fiscally possible, and to provide pupils with
26 the guidance counseling they need to prepare for the future.

27 (c) The Legislature hereby appropriates one hundred million
28 dollars (\$100,000,000) from the General Fund in fiscal year
29 2006–07 to the State Department of Education in order to
30 increase the number of guidance counselors in all public schools
31 including any or all of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.